

Pixy-led by pixilation

Pixilated means literally "**affected by the pixies**" (1848, from *pixy-led*: bewitched). A pixie is a playfully mischievous sprite (elf). That's why the proper spelling of pixilated contains only one 'l'. And the word has nothing to do with computer pixels (picture elements) and 'pixellation,' as reflected by the different spelling.

"Pixilation is a technique that closely borders on live-action practice, although it clearly falls within the realm of animation. Whereas clay and puppet animators move inanimate objects incrementally before a camera and shoot them frame by frame, the pixilation animator shoots 'live' objects -- essentially, people -- frame by frame." -- Furniss.

Classic examples are Norman McLaren's *Neighbours* (1952) and *A Chairy Tale* (1957). Modern examples are the Bolex Brothers' *The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb* and the films of Paul De Nooijer.

"Time-lapse photography is a related technique, the major difference being that pixilation is associated with 'enacted' scenes while time-lapse deals with naturally occurring phenomena." --Furniss.

These two related techniques occur simultaneously in rare films such as *Hus (House)* by Inger Lise Hanson, *Flight of the Stone* by Susanne Horizon-Franzel, and in Stephen Arthur's [Vision Point](#) (where pixilation of the camera turns the inanimate landscape into an 'actor').

"It is a type of movement rather than a class of objects; and the effect of a process of perceiving rather than of an image perceived." (Robyn Ferrell quoted by Furniss) "Not all

animation creates the sense of the 'uncanny' in the viewer, but it seems as though 3D animation is apt to provoke that experience to a greater extent than 2D animation. The reason is that, unlike 2D figures, 3D objects already have a 'real life' status, even before they are set in motion." --Furniss

The term pixilation is also used more generally to mean the animation of any real object -- as opposed to puppets or models -- photographed frame by frame to achieve unusual effects of motion:

"Humans become like objects or automata in a mechanical process... but pixilation can also humanise the universe of inanimate objects." -- Noake

In this broader sense pixilation includes such films as David Anderson's *Door*, Silke Parzich's *Spring*, many of Svankmajer's films, Mati Kutt's *Underground*, Hanson's *Static*, and Arthur's *Vision Point*.

References:

Maureen Furniss, *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics*, 1998

Roger Noake, *Animation: A Guide to Animated Film Techniques*, 1988